

My name is Randy Thompson, I'm from Martell, NE.

I would like to thank the Chairman and the committee for allowing me to be here today. I would also like to recognize and thank our Nebraska representative Mr. Terry for his work on the Congressional Research Memo clarifying some questions surrounding the pipeline.

I testify before you today not as an advocate for any group. I am here as a representative of the Thompson Family Farm, a small 400 acre farming and livestock operation in Merrick County, Nebraska. I believe, however, that my voice carries the concerns of many farmers and ranchers along the proposed route of the Keystone XL pipeline.

We all have shared concerns that a pipeline of this magnitude and with such inherent risks could endanger our livelihoods and way of life. Most all of these family operations have been built through decades of hard work and love for the land on which we live.

Farmers and ranchers are often used in campaign ads to represent what is best about America. This is the face you put in your ads. We built America and we feed America every single day. Our country and our family operations deserve serious questions and more time devoted to studying this project. We deserve a pause; we deserve you putting on the brakes.

Our families have invested too much blood, sweat, and tears to simply sit back and let a foreign corporation take a portion of our hard earned land through eminent domain for their private use and gain.

When a company like TransCanada comes along and tries to bully and intimidate us into signing unwanted easement agreements, it only serves to make us more determined, and we plant our feet just a little bit firmer in the sand.

I do not consider myself to be an environmentalist in the true sense of the word, instead, as with most Nebraska farmers and ranchers, I consider myself to be a conservationist. We need to be conservationists and stewards of the land because if we're not, the land won't return to us what we need to survive.

Our government—including each of you—has recognized a need to conserve our water, our soils, and other natural resources, and it has spent billions of dollars sponsoring various conservation programs in order to achieve that goal.

Submerging a giant risky oil pipeline into our land, thus threatening the largest natural body of clean water in this Hemisphere with contamination, certainly seems contrary to those goals.

The damage to the fragile Nebraska Sandhills during the construction phase of this pipeline could literally undo decades of conservation work. Ranchers in that area of Nebraska have tried

countless methods over the years to keep their sandy soils from blowing away. The pipeline represents a devastating set back to those efforts.

We Nebraskans may be a little independent and bullheaded at times, but we're not uninformed. We have witnessed the results of other pipeline spills and associated problems throughout this country, and that's why we are wary of this proposed project. And, it's why we are asking you to slow down on this proposed bill and ensure the proper regulations and safety measures are in place.

TransCanada's Keystone Pipeline, which crosses the eastern part of our state, has been in operation for less than a year and has already had twelve confirmed leaks. The latest of which spewed a geyser of chemical laden tar sands sixty feet into the air. In only a few minutes, it discharged nearly twenty thousand gallons into the surrounding area. How can we have confidence that this won't happen on our property?

I for one am not willing to bet my livelihood on it, and I sincerely doubt that any of you would either.

As Nebraskans, we're being asked to put a lot on the line for this project, and we have yet to see anything to ease our doubts about it. It seems to me that our country has already been more than generous to our neighbors to the north. We're proposing to let them use our country as a corridor in which to ship their oil, thus allowing them access to the world oil market.

We have allowed them to select a pipeline route that is the shortest and most economical for them, even though this route selection would expose some of our country's most valuable resources, specifically the Sandhills and Ogallala Aquifer, to potential harm. We have looked the other way while TransCanada has bullied and intimidated American landowners with threats of eminent domain even though their project is still in the permitting process.

With so many unanswered questions about the safety of this project perhaps it's time for the U.S. to hit the brake pedal instead of the accelerator; and perhaps it's time that our government starts placing the concerns of American citizens over and above those of a foreign corporation.

That is why I am here today. To be the voice of my fellow farmers and ranchers and to ask you to not pass this bill and instead dig deeper into the many risks and concerns citizens along the proposed pipeline route have raised. We owe at least that to every family, including mine.